

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claims:

1. (currently amended) An electronic content proving method using one of a computer system ~~and or~~ a computer network comprising the steps of:

(a) a proof service provider transmitting a certificate generation request to a witness or a certificate generator;

(b) said witness or said certificate generator obtaining electronic content upon the receipt of said certificate generation request from said service provider; and

(c) generating a certificate, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

2. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein said certificate includes said electronic content, or data that uniquely represent said electronic content.

3. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of

(d) accumulating said certificate in said service provider or transmitting said certificate to a user.

4. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

5. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein said step of generating said certificate includes a step of providing a signature for said certificate; and wherein said signature step includes a first configuration process consisting of a first signature step by said witness or said certificate generator and a second signature step by said service provider, or a second configuration process consisting of a signature step by a notary service provider.

6. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 5, wherein said signature is encrypted using a public key encryption method to prevent alteration by a person other than a signer.

7. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 2, wherein said data that uniquely represents said electronic content is a hash code.

8. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein in accordance with a request from said user, said certificate generation request is transmitted to said witness or to said certificate generator on one or multiple dates, or is transmitted continuously during one or multiple specific periods.

9. (original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein synchronization of time is effected between said service provider and said witness or said certificate generator.

10. (currently amended) A proving system for a service provider that proves oneness for perusal and non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network comprising:

means for transmitting a certificate generation request to a witness or a certificate generator;

means for obtaining electronic content upon the receipt of said certificate generation request from said service provider; and

means for generating a certificate, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

11. (original) The proving system according to claim 10, wherein said certificate includes said electronic content, or data that uniquely represent said electronic content.

12. (original) The proving system according to claim 10, further comprising means for accumulating said certificate in a computer system of said service provider or means for transmitting said certificate to a user.

13. (original) The proving system according to claim 10, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

14. (original) The proving system according to claim 10, wherein said means for generating said certificate includes means for providing a signature for said certificate; wherein said signature means includes a first configuration consisting of first signature means by said witness or said certificate generator and second signature means by said service provider, or a second configuration consisting of signature means by a notary service provider.

15. (original) The proving system according to claim 14, wherein encryption means using a public key encryption method is employed for said signature means to prevent alteration by a person other than a signer.

16. (currently amended) A proving system for a service provider that proves openness for perusal or non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network, comprising:

- means for accepting and for analyzing a service request received from a user;
- means for selecting a witness or a certificate generator from a registered member group in which witnesses or certificate generators are registered;
- means for transmitting a certificate generation request to said witness or said certificate generator that is selected;
- means for accepting a certificate from said witness or from said certificate generator; and
- means for transmitting said certificate to said user, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

17. (original) The proving system according to claim 16, wherein said means for accepting said certificate includes means for providing an electronic signature for said certificate.

18. (currently amended) A system for a witness or a certificate generator that proves openness for perusal or non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network, comprising:

means for accepting a certificate generation request from a user;

means for accessing an address of an electronic content included in said certificate generation request, and obtaining said electronic content;

means for generating a certificate including said electronic content, or code that uniquely represents said electronic content; and

means for transmitting said certificate to said service provider, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

19. (original) The system according to claim 18, wherein said means for generating said certificate includes means for providing an electronic signature for said certificate.

20. (currently amended) A storage medium for storing a program code that proves openness for perusal and non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network, said program code comprising:

a program code for, in accordance with a service request from a user or a self service request, transmitting a certificate generation request to a witness or a certificate generator;

a program code for obtaining electronic content upon the receipt of said certificate generation request from said service provider;

a program code for generating a certificate that includes said electronic content, or data that uniquely represent said electronic content; and

either a program code for accumulating said certificate in a computer system of said service provider or a program code for transmitting said certificate to a user, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for said proof.

21. (original) An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing an electronic content proving method, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the steps of claim 1.

22. (original) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a proving system, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the system of claim 10.

23. (original) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a proving system, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the system of claim 16.

24. (original) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing proof of openness for perusal or non-alteration of an electronic content, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the system of claim 18.